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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 005226

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IN](#) [PK](#) [INDO](#) [PAK](#)

SUBJECT: PM: SPIKE IN TERRORISM COULD THREATEN INDO-PAK
RAPPROCHEMENT

REF: A. NEW DELHI 5165

[B](#). NEW DELHI 4915

[C](#). NEW DELHI 4689

Classified By: Charge Bob Blake, for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#). (C) Summary: In addition to the July 6 attack in Ayodhya, senior J&K politicians and civilian officials are increasingly under terrorist attack, and a long string of bombings in Kashmir is growing more lethal. The recent incidents in J&K, coupled with the Ayodhya attack (Ref A), led to PM Singh's most pointed public comments on Pakistani support for cross-border terrorism since he took office, including his warning that continued attacks could jeopardize the peace process. Observers commented that a disruption in Indo-Pak ties is exactly what the terrorists desire. GOI infiltration estimates show 2005 levels still below those for 2004, but the summer months are predictably leading to a spike in those numbers as well. Delhi-based analysts have begun to speculate that Islamabad may be pulling the strings to remind India that it maintains a robust capability to direct terrorist attacks if progress wanes on Kashmir. End Summary.

PM Warns Islamabad

[2](#). (C) Whether the impetus comes from disaffected terrorists or from Islamabad, the spike in terrorist violence has steeled New Delhi's resolve. PM Manmohan Singh told reporters before his July 6 flight to the G-8 Summit "the terror attack in Ayodhya was a major incident, and there was no doubt that the infrastructure for terrorism (in Pakistan) is by and large intact." "These incidents, if they are repeated, have the potential to disrupt the peace process," he added. This measured statement is the closest the PM has come to blaming Pakistan for an attack since he came to office over a year ago, although he declined to comment further on cross-border terrorism. The PM broke his silence in the wake of Ayodhya and a rising tide of high-profile attacks in J&K, as detailed in paras 3-4.

Terrorists Target J&K Motorcades

[3](#). (C) Three recent high-profile assassination attempts on J&K state ministers mark a new escalation of violence there. Additional Director General of Police (J&K) Kuldeep Khoda theorized that these attacks were designed to demonstrate that the terrorist groups retain the capability to attack these well-protected civilian targets:

-- Police arrested a suspected Hizbul Mujahadeen terrorist on June 27 in Anantnag shortly before J&K Minister of State for Home Affairs AR Veeri was to make a public address.

-- Rural Development Minister and State Congress Party President Peerzada Mohammad Sayeed, along with Roads and Buildings Minister Ghulam Ahmed Mir and two state legislators, narrowly avoided a July 4 IED blast in Srinagar as they were driving together to a meeting.

-- On July 6, attackers raked Irrigation and Flood Control Minister Sayed Bashir Ahmed's bulletproof car with automatic weapons fire, wounding several of his security detail and a civilian, although the Minister emerged unscathed.

Surge in Lethal J&K Bomb Attacks

[4](#). (C) There were approximately 70 explosion attacks in J&K during the first six months of 2005, according to the Institute for Conflict Management's database. Most of these caused no fatalities, none killed more than three people, and many caused no casualties at all. The month of May, however, saw five explosions wounding more than 20 civilians each. The recent surge in lethal bomb attacks include the following:

-- June 13, Pulwama township (Ref C): 15 killed and over 100 injured when a car bomb detonated in front of a school near a crowded marketplace. No group claimed responsibility.

-- June 24, Srinagar: 9 soldiers killed and over 20 injured after an RDX-laden car detonated near their bus. Hizbul

Mujahedeen claimed responsibility.

-- June 29, Srinagar: 10 wounded during a grenade attack in Srinagar's city center. No group claimed responsibility.

GOI Says Infiltration Rising

15. (C) A public Home Ministry report estimated that 60 terrorists crossed the LoC into J&K in June after frozen passes along the LoC cleared, up from 37 in May. Kashmir police official Khoda told us that the J&K Police infiltration estimates for 2005 were still well below those for 2004 on a month-on-month basis, but noted that there was a dramatic seasonal upswing from April to May, albeit still below 2004 figures. NDTV Defense Correspondent Col. (ret.) Ajai Shukla, who visited Kashmir in June, explained that weather and terrorists had significantly degraded the LoC fence, facilitating infiltration; he added that traps set by the Army (i.e. punji sticks) wounded more soldiers than they did terrorists.

Possible Strains on Indo-Pak Rapprochement as a Result

16. (C) Khoda and our journalist contacts in Srinagar tell us that pro-Pakistan separatist hardliner SAS Geelani and Hizbul Mujahedeen supremo Syed Salahuddin "are not comfortable with the Indo-Pak dialogue" and fear they are being sidelined (Ref B). They opine that the escalation in high-profile and lethal attacks is a "spoiler's move" to set back or disrupt rapprochement.

17. (C) However, they also say they cannot rule out that the increase in violence is a reminder from Islamabad that it can ramp up terrorism if the peace process fails to advance their Kashmir agenda. Tahir Mohi-ud-din, editor of J&K's most widely circulated weekly "Chattan," suggested to us that if the attacks were not driven by "terrorist spoilers," then "people from across the border want to keep pressure on the dialogue." "Kashmir Images" editor Bashir Manzar echoed that the attacks might be a signal that "Pakistan wants to show its bargaining chip."

Comment: GOI Patience Being Tested

18. (C) The PM's pointed remarks to Islamabad on terrorism signal his frustration that improving bilateral atmospherics are not translating into a better security situation in J&K. Given the PM's reluctance overtly to reference cross-border terrorism in the two Singh-Musharraf joint statements, his statement represents a stronger warning than the words themselves suggest. Calling Ayodhya a "major incident" puts Islamabad on warning that its goodwill with Delhi is not inexhaustible. Saying that more spectacular attacks could derail the peace process signals Musharraf that rapprochement is not yet "irreversible" as far as the PM is concerned.

BLAKE